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ABSTRACT

Cultural and national history have profoundly modeled Greek society and continue to play a vital role in Greek policy and in cultural and social life. This handbook provides a brief overview of secondary education in Greece. The first part describes the country's societal, historical, and political background; educational history and current education system; the structure of secondary education; and administrative structure of the education system. The second part examines specific issues in Greek secondary education, including curricula and innovation; the relationship between school and society and between the internal and external support structures; evaluation and assessment, training, functions, and employment conditions of teachers and principals; and financing and budgeting. Eight tables and one figure are included. (Contains 5 references.) (LMI)

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Secondary education in Greece

Council of Europe Press

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Secondary education in Greece

by Denis Kallen

Guide to secondary education in Europe
Editor Denis Kallen

A secondary education for Europe
Council for Cultural Co-operation

Council of Europe Press, 1996

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The **Council of Europe** was founded in 1949 to achieve greater unity between European parliamentary democracies. It is the oldest of the European political institutions and has thirty-nine member states,[1] including the fifteen members of the European Union. It is the widest intergovernmental and interparliamentary grouping in Europe, and has its headquarters in the French city of Strasbourg.

Only questions related to national defence are excluded from the Council of Europe's work, and the Organisation has activities in the following areas: democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms; media and communication; social and economic affairs; education, culture, heritage and sport; youth, health, environment and regional planning; local democracy; and legal co-operation.

The **European Cultural Convention** was opened for signature in 1954. This international treaty is open to European countries that are not members of the Council of Europe, and it enables them to take part in the Organisation's programmes on education, culture, sport and youth. So far, forty-four states have acceded to the European Cultural Convention; the Council of Europe's full member states plus Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, the Holy See and Monaco.

The **Council for Cultural Co-operation** (the CDCC) is responsible for the Council of Europe's work on education and culture. Four specialised committees – the Education Committee, the Standing Conference on University Problems, the Culture Committee and the Cultural Heritage Committee – help the CDCC to carry out its tasks under the European Cultural Convention. There is also a close working relationship between the CDCC and the regular conferences of specialised European ministers responsible for education, culture and cultural heritage.

The CDCC's programmes are an integral part of the Council of Europe's work, and, like the programmes in other sectors, they contribute to the Organisation's three overarching policy objectives for the 1990s:

- the protection, reinforcement and promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms and pluralist democracy;

- the promotion of an awareness of European identity;

1. Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia", Turkey, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

– the search for common responses to the great challenges facing European society.

The CDCC's education programme covers school, higher and adult education, as well as educational research. At present, there are projects on: education for democratic values; history; modern languages; school links and exchanges; the reform of secondary education; access to higher eduction; the reform of legislation on higher education in central and eastern Europe; academic mobility; and educational documentation and research.

In 1991, the Council for Cultural Co-operation of the Council of Europe launched a project entitled "A secondary education for Europe". The aims of the project are to:

– give young people the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to meet the major challenges of European society;

– prepare young people for higher education, and for mobility, work and daily life in a multilingual and multicultural, democratic Europe;

– make young people aware of their common cultural heritage and their shared responsibilities as Europeans.

This project has two elements: the first devoted to reflections and consultations among the member states on the overall policies and strategies, and the second on the European dimension in the school curriculum.

The series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" sets out to present in a synthetic form – country by country – the major elements of secondary education structures and policies that exist in CDCC member states.

Each guide has been written, on the basis of a common analysis, by experts designated by the authorities in each country concerned.

Denis Kallen has undertaken the difficult task of the general co-ordination of this series, guaranteeing its coherence and thus allowing comparisons to be made among countries.

Given that this is a field in which developments sometimes take place very quickly and are of an almost permanent nature, it is possible that, despite the considerable efforts made to take into account the latest reforms in the pipeline, certain changes may have taken place since the manuscript was originally received.

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I. General presentation

1. Societal, historical and political background

Cultural and national history, and tradition have profoundly modelled Greek society and continue to play a vital role in Greek policy and in cultural and social life. The glorious classical past is constantly remembered. More recently, the struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire (finally secured in 1827) and the constitution of the Greek State, which after fierce battles led to the loss of the last Greek territories in Asia Minor and part of Thracia, and more recently still, the civil war that raged until many years after the end of the second world war have left deep scars.

In 1981, Greece joined the then European Community. It is still one of the less developed countries of the present European Union. On the other hand, its cultural and economic influence spread far beyond the country's borders. This is due, amongst other things, to the strong attachment of the millions of Greeks all over the world, in particular in North America, to their motherland and to its culture and its traditions. They represent a powerful and committed diaspora that has also provided political support during many critical stages in the history of modern Greece.

The modernisation that began after the end of the civil war suffered a temporary lapse during the regime of the colonels. But it was taken up again after the overturning of the military regime. The part of the working force employed in the primary sector declined from more than half in 1960 to less than one-third twenty years later and it has since further diminished at a rapid pace. The share of industry has grown, but it has remained relatively modest compared to that of the tertiary sector, which has gone through a rapid growth period. Already in the early 1980s it employed over 40% of the labour force and its share is now undoubtedly well over 50%. Female participation in the labour force remains modest: in 1991, 35% of 14 to 64-year-old women are employed as compared to 77,8% of men. But the average rate conceals extreme differences in female employment between the urbanised population and that in mountainous regions and islands.

The economic crisis has hit Greece very hard. Growth in public spending has faced drastic cuts, and wages have been severely moderated. Nevertheless, the rate of public spending remains too high in the eyes of most economic observers. Unemployment is high and it is not likely to decrease in the near future. The unemployment rate of the population under 25 is five to six times higher than that of the over 25-year-olds.

2. History of education

Immediately after having acquired independence, Greece created its own education system. At first, it was strongly influenced by the German educational tradition, but the French administrative and educational tradition also played an important role. The strong centralisation of policy and administration that resulted from these influences has remained one of the most salient features of Greek education until the present day.

From the very beginning, education at all levels was free of charge. Already in 1834, four-year compulsory education (corresponding to the four-year primary school of German-Bavarian coinage) was introduced. The schools' curricula were deeply entrenched in the classical heritage and orthodox religion.

The school has indeed played a key role in the Greek political and cultural history of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It has helped to consolidate the Greek national state and it has made a strong contribution to the flourishing of tradition, and cultural and artistic manifestations. The school has also made possible the massive geographical and social mobility both within national borders and beyond that has marked Greece's history. This has led to the gradual depopulation of the more remote and mountainous regions in Epirus and Thracia, and of the more distant islands. On the other hand, Greece did not seem to offer enough opportunities for the energy and entrepreneurial skills that were thus released. These had to find an outlet abroad, but they were, to an extent, also diverted towards other activities. The existence of a strong – and in the eyes of many oversized – bureaucracy on the one hand, and of a vast sector of "grey" economic activity on the other, are probably not unrelated to this excess of competence and skill.

Education was – and to a large extent it still is – not geared to the needs of the emerging industry. Vocational and technical education were poorly developed and it took the Venizelos dictatorship in the between-war period for a full overhaul of the education system to be undertaken: compulsory education was extended to six years, secondary education comprised, henceforward, a single six-year cycle and upper secondary technical education was introduced.

In the 1960s the government of Papandreou undertook further major educational reforms. Compulsory schooling was extended to nine years, a technical lyceum was established parallel to the general one; both were of equal status in so far as eligibility for higher education is concerned. The most spectacular decision was to replace classical Greek (the "Kathaveroussa" or "pure" language) by modern Greek ("demotiki" or the people's language). A temporary re-establishment of classical Greek by the colonels was later reversed and the further modernisation of the education system taken at hand energetically. Thus the introductory examination to upper secondary education was abolished and new laws for higher and for primary and secondary education voted. Their main aims were the improvement of the educational provision in the regions and a modest decentralisation of educational policy-making and administration. Repeating grades in primary education was abolished.

The demand for higher education over past decades has increased dramatically, but higher education could – and would – not offer the number of places to satisfy this increased demand. Thus, gradually, stringent selection was introduced by means of a university entrance examination administered by the state.

In spite of the major problems and obstacles that had to be overcome, the trust of the Greek people in the benefits of education has not wavered. Parents are willing to make great sacrifices in order to offer their children the best possible education and to complement the public effort by paying for private courses if these promise to be beneficial to their offspring.

The restricted admission to higher education has resulted in an exodus of students to universities abroad; to the neighbouring Balkan countries, in particular to Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, but also to England, the USA and France. Thus by the end of the 1980s there were some 30 000 young Greeks studying abroad. Nearly all of the foreign students in Bulgaria and Yugoslavia were Greek. After the downfall of the communist regimes the exodus to the former communist countries strongly diminished and the bulk of the students abroad are now in western Europe or North America.

3. Present education system

The Greek Constitution contains, in Article 16, the following provisions:

– research and teaching in arts and sciences are free, while their development and promotion are obligations of the state;

– education is the basic mission of the state. Its aims are the moral, spiritual, professional and physical education of the Greeks, the development in them

of a national and religious conscience and a further fulfilment as free and responsible citizens;

– the number of years of compulsory education cannot be less than nine.

The philosophy underlying the Greek education system thus reflects the basic values of the Greek nation, which also constitutes the foundation of western civilisation.

Every citizen, regardless of origin, social background or sex, has access to equal educational opportunities. Investment in education is an obligation of the state. Therefore, education at all levels, including at the higher level, as already mentioned, has always been offered by the state free of charge and this principle has on the whole never been seriously contested by any group or party.

In Greece, the prerequisite of compulsory schooling is fulfilled by attendance of primary schools (six years) and lower secondary establishments or gymnasia (three years). Particular attention during compulsory schooling is given to the needs of children that require special care.

Freedom of choice is inseparable from the right to education, which is guaranteed by the Constitution. Freedom of choice presupposes extensive information on the various types and programmes of education available.

In order to realise this right and to enable the students to avail themselves fully of the existing educational possibilities and to choose responsibly their educational career in agreement with their talents, personality and interests, a system of school and vocational counselling has been established. However, as will be seen later, the present system does not offer adequate possibilities for individual counselling.

The existence of private schools is not in contradiction with the constitutional right to education and it is even the logical corollary of the right of free choice. The existing private schools are mainly paid by parents' fees. At the secondary level, approximately 7% of schools are private.

Curricula in private schools are the same as those offered in public education. Any change in the curriculum requires the approval of the minister. Moreover, the Minister of Education prescribes the legal framework and guidelines as regards the functioning of private schools and the recognition and equivalence of their certificates.

Due to the increasing demand for education and also to the extension of compulsory schooling from six to nine years, the number of pupils in secondary education has kept growing during the last twenty years (see Table 1 in

the appendix). There is a persistent trend for the percentage of pupils admitted to upper secondary education to increase. The percentage of the age-group going on to upper secondary education is now around 90%.

On the other hand, due to a declining birth rate, the annual intake in primary education has decreased and as a result the number of pupils in compulsory education has decreased; slowly as of 1970, but at a more rapid pace in the past few years.

Thus, during the school year of 1993/94 there were 425 500 pupils in the gymnasium, namely a virtually unchanged enrolment since 1990 and one which represents only a minor increase compared to 1980/81. But the primary school enrolment has decreased since the mid-1980s by almost 12%. The effects of the demographic decline will eventually lead to a decrease of numbers in the gymnasium in the next few years and in the upper secondary school as of the late 1990s.

The system of secondary education introduced in the 1970s has proved to be deficient in many ways and improvements and changes soon appeared indispensable. The principal deficiencies were: too narrow profiles and an excessive fragmentation in vocational education; an insufficient number of hours of practical training in technical and vocational education; irrelevance to real needs and a too high degree of difficulty in general education; and the lack of co-ordination between the curricula of primary and lower secondary education.

The improvements carried out since then, in particular in the wake of the 1985 Law, have removed some of these inadequacies. But they were more corrections than profound changes. The process of reform and innovation has eventually to be vigorously pursued.

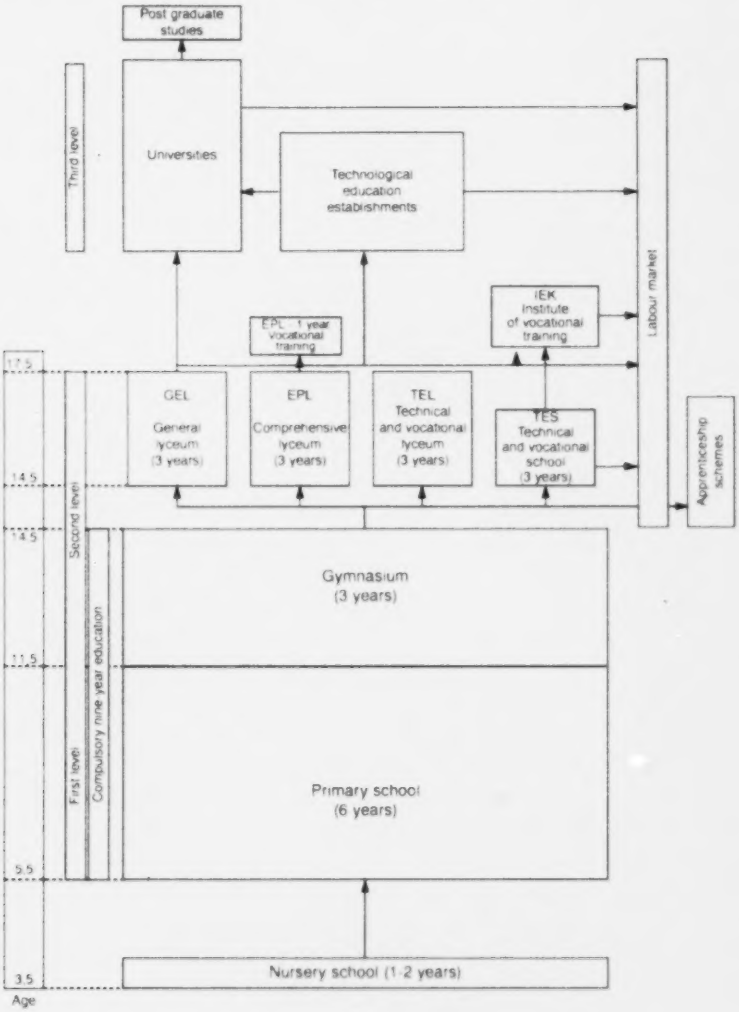
4. Structure of secondary education

The present organisation of the Greek school system has been determined by the 1985 Law, although subsequently, a few amendments were made. It is shown in Figure 1.

Secondary education extends over six years, from the age of eleven-and-a-half to seventeen-and-a-half. It is divided into a three-year lower cycle called a gymnasium cycle and a three-year upper cycle called a lyceum cycle. In addition, there are three-year technical-vocational schools.

Pupils graduating from primary school receive a final certificate that mentions the attainment levels in the various subjects. They are registered in the gymnasium without any further condition. Pupils graduating from the gymna-

Figure 1: Structure of the Greek education system



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sium are also given a leaving certificate without passing an examination. This gymnasium "apolytirion" also mentions the acquired attainment levels and it enables the holder to enrol in all types of upper secondary education without any further examination.

In addition to the general gymnasium the following specific types of gymnasiums exist:

– music gymnasiums offer besides the regular curriculum an additional fifteen hours per week of music education to talented pupils. There are thirteen such gymnasiums;

– gymnasiums with physical education classes offer in addition to the regular curriculum six hours of weekly physical training;

– ecclesiastical gymnasiums prepare male pupils for priesthood. Besides the ordinary curriculum they offer extracurricular activities that contribute to the development of the appropriate habits and attitudes.

Lyceums and technical-vocational schools (TVS) can be public or private institutions and day or evening type.

In the evening lyceums the courses last four years, whereas the evening TVS involve three evening studies after two years' daytime education.

Of the gymnasium graduates who enrol in upper secondary education, about 60% go to the general lyceum, 25% to the technical one, 5% to the polyvalent lyceum and about 10% to the TVS.

Graduates from the general lyceum receive a certificate called the "Lyceum Apolytirion". As in the case of the gymnasium, this document is obtained without any specific final examination and it also indicates achievement in the various subjects. All the holders of this "apolytirion" have the right to sit for the university entrance examinations.

Pupils graduating from the technical-vocational lyceums and from the polyvalent lyceums receive, under certain conditions, a certificate that enables them to enter either employment in the field of their specialisation or to enter non-university higher education, in particular the technological education establishments (TEI).

The TVS "Ptychion" or final certificate gives access to the corresponding employment, but also to the first degree of the general lyceum or the second degree of the technical-vocational lyceum.

There is thus a possibility of horizontal mobility between TVS and the lyceum. In addition, there is an important degree of mobility after the first grade of

the lyceum, from general to technical-vocational or from the latter to general.

The already-mentioned university entrance examination is organised every year by the Ministry of Education. The examination tasks are the same all over the country and the procedures require a very strict and elaborate control system. Pass rates depend upon the numbers of places that are available in the faculties that correspond to the four "streams" or "DESMIs" in the upper degrees of the general lyceum. These numbers are determined each year after negotiations between the universities and the ministry – usually after fierce debate.

As demand for places far exceeds those available, the majority of candidates are doomed to fail the examination. Between 1982 and 1992, on average only one out of three candidates was successful.

The enormous value that is attached to the university entrance examinations engenders an equally enormous pressure on general lyceums. The lyceum final certificate is by the same token almost totally devaluated. Furthermore, the last years of lyceum studies are entirely dominated by the perspective of the university entrance examination and pupils, parents and teachers alike consider that their only value lies in the preparation that they provide for the examinations.

It is at this point that the private cramming courses, offered by the "Frontistera" institutions, acquire their full legitimation. It is generally admitted that the quality of teaching in the lyceums is poor, or at least that it is in no way adequate to prepare pupils for the entrance examinations. Hence, as already indicated, parents with almost no exception send their children to the afternoon private courses where they are often taught by the same teachers who in the morning have in vain attempted to arouse their interest. The subjects studied in these courses are logically only those examined in the entrance examinations.

In addition to the inevitable demotivation that this practice implies for the formal courses, it also leads to a devaluation of those subjects that will not be examined. The formally speaking broad lyceum curriculum is thus in fact narrowed down to a rather small number of disciplines. Furthermore, as the examination relies very heavily on memorisation, rote learning is more important than understanding and active participation.

5. Administrative structure

Legislation in Greece, as elsewhere, is passed by parliament. Parliament also decides on general policy guidelines. Implementation of the parliament's decision is the task of the ministry and where applicable of regional, local and institutional (schools') administrations.

At the regional and local levels the following bodies are involved in the administration, management and support of secondary education:

- the directors of secondary education in the fifty-four prefectures ("Nomos") who report directly to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs;

- the heads of the education offices in the prefectures, existing in the larger regional units;

- the school principal and his/her deputy who report to the regional director;

- the teachers' council of every school unit;

- education organisations and committees.

The educational prerogatives of regional and local administration have in the recent past been enlarged (see below "The relationship between school and society and the external and internal support structure").

The main functions of the Minister of Education are:

- assessment of educational needs and determination of the goals and objectives liable to meet these needs;

- provision of a legal framework which allows the organisation and mobilisation of the necessary programmes, resources for staff and the like;

- co-ordination and evaluation of the regional and local services and educational provisions;

- financial support and control of all educational activities.

The directors of education in the prefectures are, in particular, responsible for the supervision of the educational activities in their constituency, for the maintenance of school buildings and for school equipment and workshops. As of recently, the responsibility for school buildings has been delegated to the prefectures. Supervision of the private schools in their area is also part of their functions. They submit proposals for action and improvement to the prefect and also directly to the Ministry of Education.

The responsibility of the heads of educational offices in the larger prefectures is very similar to those of the directors.

School advisers or counsellors are in each prefecture responsible for a group of teachers that teach the same discipline. They also provide or organise in-service training and pedagogical support to the teachers in their discipline.

II. Specific issues

1. Curricula and innovation

The state decides upon all curricula to be offered, on the disciplines to be taught in each curriculum and on the number of hours per curriculum and per discipline. It also decides on access conditions and on certifications and examinations.

Furthermore, the state is, as already mentioned, also responsible for the production and (free) distribution of textbooks; it prescribes for each subject and for every level one single textbook.

The curriculum in the fullest sense of the word is thus the sole responsibility of the central administration, although recently there has been a very modest margin for regional and local adjustment of curricula. The first concrete steps towards this "regionalisation" of curricula have, however, still to be set and in view of the total lack of experience and expertise at the regional and local levels, not too much should be expected in this matter, at least not in the near future.

The main goal of the gymnasium is to contribute to the full development of each pupil's learning potential, in accordance with their capacities and with the needs of society. The state pursues this goal by offering to all pupils the same curriculum. There are no elective subjects in the gymnasium curriculum. The concern for full formal equality of educational opportunities is thus given precedence over that of offering an education that is adapted to particular needs and interests.

As of September 1993, a new gymnasium curriculum has been in force. The timetable is presented in Table 1. The main novelty is the introduction of information technology. It has a twofold objective:

- familiarise the pupils with the use of computers;

- exploit the possibilities that computers offer to change the methods of teaching and the ways of thinking and of working.

Table 1: Timetable for final-year gymnasium pupils

Subjects	Hours per week			
Core subjects				
Religion	1			
History	2			
Philosophy	2			
Political science	1			
Foreign language	2			
Physical education	2			
Total	10			
Preparatory subjects	4branches			
	A	B	C	D
Modern (language and literature)	4	4	4	4
Mathematics	8	4	–	4
Physics	5	5	–	–
Chemistry	3	3	–	–
Biology	–	4	–	–
Ancient Greek (language and literature)	–		8	–
Latin	–	–	4	–
History	–	–	4	4
Sociology	–	–	–	4
Economics	–	–	–	4
Total	20	20	20	20
General total: 30 hours of lessons per week				

Note: The pupils can choose a branch from the four available.

However, whereas the gymnasiums were on the whole quite rapidly equipped with the necessary hardware, there were problems in providing the necessary software. The main obstacle to a successful implementation of the new policy has been, however, the inadequacy of the in-service training provided. Information technology is as a result often taught by inadequately prepared teachers or not taught at all.

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Since 1992 support tuition has been introduced in the gymnasiums for pupils with learning difficulties. Such pupils are given the opportunity to follow additional courses within their own school at the end of the school day. In the courses, special attention is paid to their learning problems.

Lyceums aim at furthering the integral development of their pupils, preparing them for further studies and providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills for making judicious career choices. Lyceum graduates should be able to find themselves a place in society and to contribute to the country's economic and social development.

The comprehensive or polyvalent lyceum specifically aims at interconnecting and deepening the objectives and curricula of the general and the technical-vocational lyceum.

In the first and second degree of the general lyceum all pupils attend the same curriculum. It includes, during a curriculum of thirty hours weekly, religion, ancient and modern Greek language and literature, history, psychology, mathematics, physics, chemistry, physical education and foreign languages. In the third grade the programme offers four branches, each corresponding to and preparing for a group of fields of higher education studies. There is a common course of ten hours a week. The "branches" or "DESMI" timetables cover twenty hours per week. In DESMIs A and B there is no ancient Greek, Latin, history, sociology or economics and the emphasis is on mathematics and the natural sciences, with DESMI A focusing strongly on mathematics (eight hours per week) and more on the natural sciences. In DESMIs C and D there are no natural sciences and in C, moreover, no mathematics. C focuses on ancient Greek, Latin and history, D on history, sociology and economics. All four DESMIs have four hours of modern Greek (bringing the common core in fact to fourteen out of thirty hours).

The time allocated to foreign languages is restricted: two hours per week in all DESMIs.

In general, pupils choose their DESMI partly on the basis of their attainment in its key disciplines, but also – and probably much more so – in view of their chosen field of specialisation in higher education.

In the first year of technical-vocational lyceums, pupils follow twenty-one hours of general subjects and thirteen hours of subjects in a specific technical-vocational field. In the second grade, the core general curriculum takes up nineteen hours and specialisation fifteen hours. Workshop training is part of this programme. In the third degree, pupils can choose between either the DESMI programmes A, B, C or D or further specialisation.

The vocational-professional status of graduates of these lyceums is regulated by presidential decree on the recommendation of the Minister of Education and other ministers concerned.

In the first grade of the polyvalent lyceum there is a common curriculum of thirty-one hours and three hours of elective subjects. Grade 2 offers sixteen hours per week of common teaching, sixteen hours of optional subjects associated with broad groups of professions and two hours of elective subjects. In the third grade, the core curriculum represents fourteen hours of lessons and there are twenty hours of specialisation similar to those of the technical-vocational lyceum.

In grades 1 and 2 of the TVS there are thirty hours of common tuition of which only six refer to general subjects and twenty-four to vocational subjects and to workshop training. The small part of general education in the TVS curriculum is striking. It is widely thought that it is too small to adequately prepare skilled workers for employment in an advanced, technological society.

Many TVSs have difficulty offering adequate workshop training. Therefore laboratory centres have been built and equipped that offer workshop training to a group of TVSs. Their equipment is more comprehensive and up to date than what most individual schools can offer.

There is a wide-felt need to update the existing curricula on a more regular and scientifically more adequate basis than have been done until now. The ministry has asked the Pedagogical Institute to undertake the necessary research and development work. The main aims are to enrich the textbooks with new cognitive elements and with material that allows the development of pupils' critical thinking and, furthermore, to establish a unified programme for all compulsory education that ensures the continuity between primary school and the gymnasium.

New activities have been promoted since 1992 that broaden the school's range of action beyond that of transferring knowledge. They include:

- cultural and scientific issues such as musical events, theatre, literary events, activities related to local history and to folklore, painting exhibitions, newspaper and magazine exhibitions;

- environmental education;

- health education.

These programmes help pupils to develop their own initiatives and imagination. They offer opportunities for fostering personal interests and talents and make the young people aware of environmental problems.

Great emphasis has indeed been put on environmental education. 110 teachers from both primary and secondary education were designated to support relevant projects at their schools. Since the school year 1992/1993, 2 000 such projects have been developed, at a cost of 250 million drachmas.

In the framework of the development of health education, the first consultative centres for young people have been established. These centres, staffed by doctors, psychologists, social workers and teachers, will co-ordinate health education projects at schools, which are, in particular, related to prevention against drugs, smoking, alcohol, Aids, cancer, etc.

In spite of all these efforts, curriculum reform remains at the centre of the present educational concern in Greece. What is lacking is a coherent overall policy that establishes priorities and seeks ways and means to create an inner-directed dynamic and motivation among schools and teachers for continuous updating and modernisation of teaching content. However, this cannot be done without removing the two main obstacles that are in the way of such a policy. In the first place the excessive control of central administration over educational programmes and content, in the second place the single and mandatory textbook ruling. The Pedagogical Institute's efforts to modernise the curricula are in the present situation doomed to fall short of their target. Proposals for radical change of the curriculum policy – and such proposals exist and have been put forward – have, until now, not been followed up.

Table 2: Gymnasium timetable

Subject	Hours per week		
	A	B	C
Religion	2	2	2
Ancient Greek language and literature	4	4	4
Modern Greek language and literature	5	4	4
History	2	2	3
Mathematics	4	4	4
Geography	2	2	–
Biology (and natural sciences)	2	–	2
Physics – chemistry	–	3	3
Foreign languages (first and second)	5	5	5
Physical education	3	3	2

Subject	Hours per week		
	A	B	C
Artistic education	2	2	2
Social education	–	2	2
Computing – technology	2	2	1
Scholastic and professional guidance	–	–	1
Total	33	35	35

There are, however, encouraging signs of change. New powers, as already mentioned, have been given to the regions and the municipalities. They also relate to the adaptation of the curriculum to regional and local needs and interests. On the other hand, there is widespread dissatisfaction with the single textbook rule, and inventive and feasible proposals have been made that would, if adopted, put an end to this unproductive practice. Last but not least, there is a general awareness of the damaging effect of the prevailing curriculum policy on the quality of education.

2. Relationship between school and society, and the external and internal support structures

The law of 1985 set up several institutions for supporting the ministry's efforts at decentralising the educational procedures and at creating the necessary links between all those involved in education and in changing the rather authoritarian traditional teaching style. Meeting these targets requires, among other things, the reinforcement of parent participation beyond their typical interest in strictly individual problems and solutions.

The institutions mobilised for this policy are:

a. The Pedagogical Institute, a self-administered organisation that reports directly to the Minister of Education. The institute undertakes research and submits proposals for action to the minister, aiming at the improvement of educational procedures. It is responsible for the development and the implementation of the curricula and for the co-ordination of educational aims with the economic, social and cultural needs of the country. It is also in charge of planning and organising the in-service training programmes for teachers.

b. The National Education Council, which functions under the authority of the Minister of Education, proposes to the minister policies concerning education of children, youth and adults.

Among the members of the council are representatives of the political parties of the national federation of teachers' unions, the national federation that represents the employers and the employees, etc.

c. The Prefectural Education Committee, which functions under the presidency of the prefect is a consultative body that submits proposals on the establishment or closing down of schools and on the distribution of funds for maintenance and running costs, as well as proposals for educational programmes for parents and adults.

Among its members are school principals, school advisers, representatives of the local parents' organisations, municipal authorities, the local teachers' union, etc.

d. The Community Education Committee, functioning under the presidency of the mayor, makes proposals for the better functioning and organisation of local schools and handles their educational and financial problems. It is composed of school principals, members of the parents' organisation, the teachers' union and of professional organisations.

In every prefecture a qualified teacher is in charge of the implementation of the career orientation programmes offered in each school. This co-ordinating teacher works in close co-operation with the Pedagogical Institute.

Furthermore, there are two self-governing public organisations whose task is to support the ministry's action in specific fields:

– the School Building Organisation, responsible for school buildings and their equipment.

As of recently, however, the responsibility for school buildings and equipment has been delegated to the prefecture and the existing organisation in the ministry is, henceforward, primarily responsible for the Attica Prefecture only.

The severe shortage of school buildings, in particular in the major cities (Athens, Saloniki, Heraklion and others), has led to the widespread practice of teaching in two and sometimes even in three shifts.

– the Textbooks Editing Organisation, responsible for the publication and distribution (entirely free of charge) of all textbooks, from primary to higher education. Each year, pupils are provided with new textbooks.

Every secondary school is supported by:

– the school council, chaired by the principal and consisting of teachers, representatives of the parents and pupils and of the local administration. Its main responsibilities are related to the school's overall functioning. It also has the

task of achieving a better communication and co-operation between the school's partners: teachers, pupils and parents.

– the school committee, consisting of the principal, representatives of the local authority, parents and pupils. It is mainly concerned with the financial management of the school.

3. Evaluation and assessment

The school is a living organism, but in our society it could not function without evaluation. Evaluation is one of the principal weak points in the Greek education system. There are no adequate mechanisms for evaluation of either the schools or the system as a whole. It is true that at the prefectural level the school advisers (they are either administrative or pedagogical experts) are in charge of reporting to their administration and that the Pedagogical Institute is in charge of co-ordinating their work and of the overall assessment of results. For several reasons, however, the system does not function satisfactorily. There is a lack of clear criteria, advisers are often insufficiently trained for their tasks, the co-ordination and articulation between regional/local and national evaluation is not clearly defined and not well organised.

But perhaps the major obstacle lies elsewhere: there is in Greece very little experience, and little or no tradition as regards "objective" evaluation. Political criteria – national or local – have always played an important role in educational policy-making and management at all levels. Appointments and promotion were as much based on political criteria as on merit. On the other hand, an inveterate concern for justice and equality has led to automatisms in matters of staffing and promotion, in the allocation of resources, and also in terms of pupil assessment and certification that are incompatible with the very concept of evaluation. Automatic grade to grade promotion and almost automatic certification at the end of courses have been conceived as safeguards against arbitrariness and "clientelism".

In so far as pupil assessment is concerned, teachers must reckon with the hostile and sometimes straightforward aggressive reactions of parents. On the other hand, besides the nationally set and administered university entrance examination there is in the system no other externally set pupil assessment, nor are there externally developed attainment tests available that teachers could use.

A Department of Evaluation has been established at the Pedagogical Institute. Its work is to provide the much-needed feedback for the reform effort and for the continuous adjustment of content and methods as well as of assessment and evaluation methods and criteria.

4. Teachers and principals: training, functions and employment conditions

Teachers in public schools are civil servants. Those in private schools are employed on civil law contracts.

The teachers for gymnasiums and for the general lyceums are trained in the universities or in the fine arts colleges. Those for the technical-vocational lyceums, for the TVS and for the polyvalent lyceums are partly trained at the universities, partly in non-university institutions, in particular in the technological education institutes.

The university trained teachers receive a minimum of pedagogical and didactical training; although, many receive none at all. Those from the TEIs follow a one-year teacher training course before appointment.

In-service training was until now organised in sixteen regional teacher training centres (PEKs). But the system did not function well. Teachers absent because of in-service training could not always be replaced. Teachers often had to travel over long distances and be away from home for the duration of the courses. Participation was eventually very insufficient.

A new system is now being put in place. A teacher training centre will be available in every prefecture. The quality and relevance of the courses that were in general judged to be inadequate are to be improved.

It is hoped, therefore, that the proportion of teachers following in-service training courses will rapidly increase. At any rate, training will be compulsory for all newly appointed teachers and for all those already in service, but obviously this cannot be enforced as long as all centres have not been put in place.

The plan is to provide in-service training for 12% of the teaching force per year. All teachers would thus be given the opportunity – and be obliged – to follow in-service training for at least one semester every seven or eight years. The syllabus is to include training in new fields such as environmental and health education, new educational technologies and the like.

The relevant 1992 reform also aims at unifying and co-ordinating the education of the various categories of teachers to a certain extent, so that the resources of the highly qualified teachers can be used flexibly.

At the same time a new system of selection and appointment for managerial posts, including school principals, has been defined. It was considered generally that the lack of specific training for the required managerial competencies on the one hand, the lack of continuity in educational management that

resulted from the usual rapid changes "at the top" on the other, represented major obstacles to effective school management.

The new system aims at replacing the former appointment system by meritocratic selection based on transparent criteria. For 75% they will consist in objectively established quantitative criteria and for 25% they will refer to judgment as to candidate's personal qualities. In addition, criteria such as motivation and commitment will be used.

Newly appointed managers and principals will, henceforward, be employed on a permanent basis, but they will only be given tenure after a four-year probation period.

The new system arouses much debate and does not meet with general approval. It profoundly upsets rooted habits at all levels of the system and hurts many vested interests – political and personal.

Much has still to be done to make it work. Teachers who in the traditional "automatické" promotion policy, based mainly on seniority, risk to loose their chances of promotion feel understandably threatened. Regional and local administrations may consider that the new system curbs their newly acquired power. An additional problem arises from the fact that the education system has entered a period of zero growth or even of decline in numbers. This leads inevitably to a decline in the number of vacancies for managerial posts and hence to more competition for the relevant job openings.

Another crucial element in Greek education is the policy of teacher recruitment on an officially established waiting list of candidates. Any graduate from higher education can put themselves on this list which is kept by the ministry. Teachers are appointed according to their position on the waiting list. By now, would-be teachers have to wait on average ten years before they are recruited and their average age is eventually well over 30. Some of them may have been working during their "waiting time" in a job that allowed them to keep up with new developments in their discipline, for example, by working for a private cramming course, but most have not. Hence, there is a much more urgent need for pre-service training in the Greek system than elsewhere. Another consequence of the delayed first appointments is that teachers are obliged to keep working as long as possible in order to build up a decent pension – another fact that increases the need for in-service training.

A new presidential decree establishes an evaluation system for teachers. The first aim is to assist the teachers in their work and as the evaluation is primarily carried out by the school advisers and by the principal, this seems an attainable target. On the other hand, the evaluation has no implications for

salaries and is not directly linked to promotion. The new teacher evaluation system still has to prove its value and it requires, in the first place, an effort in the direction of more information and the training of the evaluators themselves.

5. Financing and budgeting

The state finances all capital and staff costs of the public education system. Municipalities bear the cost of school maintenance and some of the running costs. Recently, the responsibility for school construction has been delegated to the prefectures, but measures have been taken to assure that differences in financial resources between the prefectures do not affect the building and physical quality of schools.

Table 3: The share of educational expenditure in the state budget

Year	1981	1985	1989	1993
Educational expenditure as a %	9.6	12.3	13.9	13.0

Table 4: Educational expenditure (public spending only) as a percentage of GDP

Year	1981	1985	1989	1993
Public expenditure as a % of GDP	2.82	3.87	3.52	3.94

It seems that by now the figure has again passed the 4% mark, as it did in the years 1991 and 1992.

Private expenditure on education is very high in Greece compared to other countries. In addition, expenditure by public administrations other than the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs is not included in the above tables. It has been calculated that the sum total of these additional expenditures represent about half of the Ministry of Education's expenditure. The totals for the above-mentioned years were eventually much higher and have, since 1990, been over 6% of GDP.

On the other hand, however, it must be considered that the Greek GDP figures as they appear in the statistics are far below the country's real income. It has been estimated that some 40% of income is not declared and hence does not figure in the official data. If one takes this into consideration, total expenditure as a percentage of real income or real GDP will be just over 4% – a very low rate in comparison to other European countries. However, it may be that the relative "poverty" of Greek schools hits the eye and a very sub-

stantial increase in expenditure would be required to assure reasonably good teaching conditions for Greek pupils.

The relevant data show a gradual deterioration of the financing of technical and vocational education, at both the secondary and higher level, if compared to general and university education. Whereas the expenditure per pupil for secondary technical and vocational education in 1989 was still about 70% higher than that of general secondary, in 1994 it was virtually the same.

Teachers' salaries count of course for a high percentage of the total cost, but they are, nevertheless, on the low to very low side compared to salaries in comparable employment, at least in the private sector, as well as on an international basis. It is generally thought that a substantial (further) raise in teacher salaries is one of the key conditions that must be met if one wants to improve the quality of the educational service. It would, in the first place, make the existing interdiction to hold second jobs more acceptable and its enforcement possible. It would also allow pre- and in-service training and perhaps also provide the necessary leverage for introducing school and teacher evaluation linked to performance and motivation on the one hand, and to promotion and maybe differential remuneration on the other.

The private schools receive no state funding. However, private general secondary schools that belong to non-profit making organisations may be supported by special appropriations from the Ministry of Education. The level of this support is decided by the minister, according to a law from 1977.

Private technical and vocational schools cannot receive grants and are entirely funded by student fees.

III. Performance of the system

If measured by the proportion of entrants to secondary education that progress through the system and obtain the final certificate of the gymnasium or that of any other type of upper secondary education, the Greek educational system is very efficient. Moreover, measured in these terms, the performance of the system has very much improved in the recent past. Thus in 1993/94, more than nine out of ten pupils who had entered the gymnasium three years earlier finished the third form and nearly all of them went on to upper secondary education. These entrants are expected to complete successfully one or other type of upper secondary education and about half of the age-group will have obtained the leaving certificate of the general lyceum and another substantial proportion that of another type of lyceum.

Thus at least two out of three young people will be eligible for higher education. Of these, most will sit for the university entrance examination. But two out of three of these candidates will fail the examination. In other words, there is a very non-selective system up to the completion of secondary education and a highly selective access to higher education.

It is difficult to know, however, what the real performance of the school system is, grade to grade promotion being either automatic or almost automatic throughout secondary education, whereas on the other hand, pupil assessment is entirely dependent on teachers' judgment.

On the other hand, if the university entrance examination is a reliable measure of student performance – and it has the advantage of being national and external – the fact that the proportion of the age-group that has passed the examination has constantly grown could be taken as an indication that the performance of secondary education has improved over time.

Greek education shows rather large regional disparities in terms of participation in upper secondary education and particularly in terms of participation in higher education.

Thus according to the 1991 census the number of pupils per 1 000 residents varied from 86 in the Greater Athens region to 67 in the Ionian islands and was as low as 58 in Thrace.

On the other hand, drop-out rates from lower secondary schooling in 1994 attained a national average of 8,9%, varying from a low of 1% to a high of 29%. The highest rates concern the islands (Aegean and Ionian), Crete and Thrace. The relevant study showed higher drop-out rates among boys than among girls. This is due probably to the fact that boys are, especially in the above regions, frequently called to work as of a young age in their parents' businesses: farming, fishing or tourism.

In general, one may think that an education system which accords so much value to memorising and attaches so little importance to student initiative, which imposes a uniform curriculum and a single textbook for all and leaves virtually no room for variation according to individual differences, is liable to leave much talent untapped and to stifle creativity and initiative to the utmost. Seen from these angles, the Greek education system has, in all likelihood, a low performance.

On the other hand, however, the Greek students who study abroad – and for the most part they are those that did not pass the university entrance examination – seem on the whole to do rather well.

IV. Trends and challenges

Greece will in the near future be more and more confronted with the same problems that most other developed European countries are facing. On the one hand, birth-rates are declining or remain low. This means in the first place that the growth in pupil numbers in secondary education that countries had become familiar with is making way for standstill or decline. On the other hand, there is an increasing demand for diversification of curricula. In Greece this is as yet not very strong, but it seems likely that it will become more and more manifest.

The combination of these two factors represent a difficult challenge for secondary schools, all the more so as in Greece the depopulation of the more remote areas, in particular of the islands, is continuing. It will become more and more difficult to maintain a full and qualitatively high secondary education provision in these regions.

A second major challenge refers to both teachers and curricula. The single textbook ruling is bound to be abolished, even if this will require complex compensation mechanisms on behalf of the parents and students. The challenge for the teachers will be enormous. It can be expected – and it must be hoped – that the change regarding textbook production and distribution will release a full-size overhaul of all curricula and of teaching methods. The ageing, and for the most part non-retrained, secondary teaching force will have great difficulty responding to the new demands that this development will engender concerning initiative, creativity and imagination. Many will be tempted to leave everything as it was, but they will soon find themselves isolated and suffer a great loss of status, besides being possibly penalised for their lack of initiative once the new teacher evaluation system has been put in place.

A third challenge that will have to be faced refers to assessment and evaluation. There is a strong political demand for evaluation of the education system and the trend towards decentralisation of education to the benefit of regions and municipalities will inevitably engender pressure on schools and teachers to accept external evaluation and to proceed to self-evaluation. The elaborate mechanisms for consultation and for participation in decision-

making that have been put in place at the regional, local and school levels are bound to result in more pressing demands on schools and teachers to account for the quality of their work.

Finally, Greek education will be under increasing pressure to improve its performance as a result of its exposure to international competition, not in the least because of its membership of the European Union.

Statistical data

Table 1. Pupils and teachers in secondary special education

	1983/84		1993/94	
	Pupils	Teachers	Pupils	Teachers
Gymnasium	75	} 25	202	} 191
Lyceum	28		131	
TVS	146	15	234	58
All secondary	249	40	567	249

Table 2. Teacher-pupil ratios in secondary education

	1970/71	1980/81	1990/91	1993/94
General secondary	34.7	19.8	14.7	14.7
– gymnasia	–	21.6	15.7	15.1
– general lyceums	–	17.1	13.3	14.2
TVS	39.7	21.0	9.9	13.6

Table 3. Participation rates in education by level and sex in 1989/90

	Total	Male	Female
Pre-primary	57.8	57.5	58.0
Primary	97.0	97.1	97.0
Secondary	92.7	94.6	90.7

Table 4: Pupils and teachers in secondary education, 1970 to 1993 (in '000s)

	1970/71		1980/81		1985/86		1990/91		1993/94	
	Pupils	Teachers	Pupils	Teachers	Pupils	Teachers	Pupils	Teachers	Pupils	Teachers
General	396.9	11.4	612.8	30.9	677.4	37.0	686.1	46.7	689.2	46.7
– gymnasium	–	–	413.8	19.2	413.3	21.06	424.7	27.0	425.5	28.1
– general lyceum	–	–	199.0	11.6	264.1[1]	15.5	261.5[1]	19.7	263.7[1]	18.5
TVS	39.7	1.0	81.9	3.9	98.3	7.8	98.1	9.9	136.0	9.9

1. Includes polyvalent lyceums

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This publication contains a brief description of secondary education in Greece.
It constitutes one part of a series entitled "Guide to secondary education in Europe" developed as part of the project "A secondary education for Europe".
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Each book has been written by an expert from the country concerned on the basis of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was drawn up by Denis Kallen who has both co-ordinated the series and undertaken the editing of each text in collaboration with the author.
Given that this is an area in which changes take place particularly quickly and that the translation, revision and publication of the manuscript require a certain amount of time, there will be an opportunity to publish updated information for the Final Conference of the project in 1996.

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